

Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council

Regular Meeting

Monday, February 23, 2009

Crystal Falls Township Hall

1384 West US-2, Crystal Falls, Michigan

6:30-8:30 p.m. EST

WUP CAC Members Present:

Donald Britton

Marcy Cella

Floyd Dropps

Shawn Hagan

Pete Jandro

Fred "Mick" Jarvi

Lorana Jinkerson

David Johnson

Martin Johnson

George Lindquist

Rory Mattson

G. Dale McNamee

Chauncey Moran

James Schmierer

Robert "Skip" Schulz

Dennis Stachewicz, Jr.

Warren Suchovsky

Philip Wirtanen

WUP CAC Members Absent:

Marvin Roberson

Department of Natural Resources Staff Present:

Stacy Welling, Upper Peninsula (UP) Field Deputy, Marquette

Craig Albright, Wildlife Division, Escanaba

Debbie Begalle, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM), Marquette

Mike Herman, Fisheries, Escanaba

Rich Hill, Parks and Recreation, Marquette

Tim Melko, Land and Facilities, Marquette

Jessica Mistak, Fisheries, Marquette

Lt. Tim Robson Law Enforcement Division, Marquette

Steve Scott, Lake Superior Basin Coordinator, Fisheries, Newberry

Penny Bacon, Executive Division, Marquette

The West Upper Peninsula (WUP) Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m. by Warren Suchovsky.

Adoption of the Agenda: Motion was made by **Phil Wirtanen** to adopt the agenda. Motion supported and passed.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Motion was made by **Marcy Cella** to approve the minutes. **Marty Johnson** supported the motion. Motion passed.

Public Comments:

Rich Hare is concerned with the lack of enforcement by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with the commercialization on commercial forest lands, particularly with bear baits; it's grown out of control.

Benji Wood is concerned with the walleye population in Lake Antoine. He would like the State to take another look at inland fish stocking in Dickinson and Iron counties. He also would like the continuation of muskellunge stocking in this area as well.

Rob Rottier is also concerned with the walleye stocking. He believes a slot size limit should be introduced. The smaller lakes get fished out by allowing five fish per person.

Steve Blackhall, President of the Eastern Dickinson County Sportsmen's Club, said walleye has declined in the last few years; people have to leave Dickinson County to catch walleye. The DNR Fisheries said 99 percent of the fish are being planted in the Bays de Noc. Mr. Blackhall said the DNR should support everyone not just the one percent who can fish in the Bays de Noc.

Rick Commenator, President of Wildlife Unlimited of Iron County, they have partnered with the DNR for the past 22 years to support hunting and fishing programs. They would like the CAC to support walleye stocking in the area inland lakes.

Bill Leonoff, Executive Director, Iron County Chamber of Commerce, is here to make a plea to the DNR for consideration of more walleye stocking in Iron County. In comparison the counties that border the Great Lakes receive more fish stocking than Iron or Dickinson counties. Tourism is a major factor in the Iron County economical cycle. We believe an equitable fish stocking procedure is part of that tourism equation.

Paul Hannuksela, Friends of Blueberry Ridge, said their primary mission is to keep Blueberry Ridge in operation. Their second goal is to get a statewide cross-country ski pass system passed through the legislature. We want to pay for our own sport and would like the CAC to support us in this endeavor.

Steve Kolbach, UP Bearhoundsmen Association, is concerned with the agenda item proposing a longer quiet period for bear bait hunting. If the CAC supports a longer quiet period, give the houndsmen more training time by changing the training date from July 15 to July 1.

Ken West would like an explanation on the walleye stocking inequity.

Larry Mellstrom would like the size limit for muskies decreased to 36 inches from the current 42 inches.

Jerry Divine supports the statewide cross-country ski pass. He supports the comments made on walleyes.

Bill Hager is wondering if it's possible for the DNR to take a proactive approach working with the feds on the wolf delisiting.

Dan Helms, Sagola Township Sportsmen's Club, said the walleye plants reproduce fish to catch later, on some of the smaller lakes.

Point of Order:

George Lindquist said according to the by-laws a member can miss three consecutive meetings. Marvin Roberson has missed four meetings. Warren said he will follow up. Other members chimed in saying by-laws are by-laws.

Special Presentations:

Floyd Dropps gave a presentation on walleye and inland walleye stocking. Floyd said the Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit (NLMMU) walleye plan says we have a lot of self-sustaining lakes in our area and not a lot of stocking is needed. He said we have some lakes that are self-sustaining but many of the lakes have declined. Floyd said a number of things have affected our inland walleye stocking, Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) and the walleye study being conducted on the Bays de Noc. According to the study most of the walleyes produced in the NLMMU will be stocked in the Bays de Noc for 2009. If surplus walleyes are produced every effort will be made to stock walleye within the management unit.

Floyd would like support for inland walleye stocking in the following priority lakes. Iron County: Chicagon, Indian, Lake Emily, Lake Mary, Ottawa, and Swan. Dickinson County: Lake Antoine, Sawyer, Carney, Silver, and Groveland Ponds; West, South, East and Island.

Floyd said in light of the fact that walleyes were wanted elsewhere, and that strong fishing indicators contradict the lake surveys, and numerous lakes were missing from the management plan, I respectfully request that the priority lakes identified in Iron and Dickinson counties receive walleye stocking beginning this year unless prevented by VHS. And the walleye management plan be re-opened and that constituency groups be consulted on changes. Open meetings should be held to get public comment on any major proposed changes to the stocking policy or new species introduction.

Mike Herman, NLMMU supervisor said he would be happy to meet with Floyd and his group and with anyone in Iron and Dickinson counties interested in walleye management.

Mike said the reason we've stocked a lot of walleye in the Bays de Noc is because they've never been evaluated before. It doesn't make sense to keep stocking a body of water without an evaluation. We are finding out there is sufficient natural reproduction in Little Bay de Noc, so we don't need to stock walleye there anymore. In Big Bay de Noc, we've found that you don't get fish unless you stock fish. Mike said 300,000 walleye fingerlings were stocked in area lakes prior to VHS. Once VHS was detected the fish that came out of Little Bay de Noc could only go back in Little Bay de Noc.

New Business:

Non Industrial Private Landowner Resources: Rory Mattson said the Conservation Districts in the UP had requests from over 12,000 private landowners who wanted assistance to manage their land but were having a hard time finding assistance. The

statewide proposal for the Conservation Districts pilot program is ten districts with four districts in the UP. The pilot program would address:

1. 6,000 acres assessed per year (on-site: type-map data base system)
2. 1,250 acres under active management (referred to private-sector: plans, etc.)
3. 10,000 cords of timber products (private-sector)
4. 300 acres targeted/identified for tree planting (private-sector)
5. Identify 250,000 green tons of biomass for availability

This would be a three year pilot program through the Conservation Districts. Rory said Conservation Districts could do it cheaper; it will cost half the price of state government. Most Conservation Districts don't have regulatory ties to them like law enforcement. The Conservation Districts won't have the trust factor with the public like the DNR and the Department of Environmental Quality. Rory made note of a letter from Director Humphries to Rory and Lori Phalen. Rory said they met to discuss funding options but the Department is in a budget crunch with tight restrictions. We've asked our legislators to look for additional monies if there is support from groups. Rory noted the overall program goals are tied to economic.

Rory Mattson would like the CAC to support the concept ("concept" was inadvertently omitted in the official minutes. Warren Suchovsky, WUP-CAC Facilitator approved this amended notation to the official minutes) of four non-industrial private forest land pilot programs in the UP administered and delivered by Conservation Districts for a period of three years.

Stacy Welling asked Rory if this proposal would be totally separate from the DNR and/or different than the proposal he submitted to the Director in December. Rory said it would depend on how the program is funded.

Stacy Welling said Wildlife Division is developing a plan to increase non-industrial private land use. The Department realizes we need to put an emphasis on private lands. Stacy also said Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and the Federal Government are looking at different programs for private lands. Stacy said hopefully, we can all work together on a plan.

Discussion followed on funding options and the need and the desire for private land assistance.

Rory Mattson moved to adopt his proposal. **Jim Schmierer** supported the motion.

Dave Johnson would like an amendment to the proposal that this program be voluntary. Warren noted, with agreement from Rory, that all of the Conservation District programs are voluntary.

Motion passed. **Marcy Cella** abstained. **Shawn Hagan** and **Chauncey Moran** opposed.

Shawn Hagan opposed the motion as it lacked specifics regarding funding (what other programs may suffer at the hands of supporting this) and the priority of such a motion in front of this Council.

Cross Country Ski Pass: Lorana Jinkerson would like the CAC to support the development of legislation that would establish a statewide state forest cross-country ski trail pass.

Dale McNamee made a motion to support. Several members supported the motion.

Discussion followed on funding options or to support a comprehensive user fee system. Debbie Begalle discussed a draft blue bill that would charge a \$10 annual fee per license vehicle that has an opt out clause. The fee would allow entrance to State Parks. If there is 75 percent compliance, 7 percent of that money would come to FMFM for state forest campgrounds, pathways, and for capital improvements, which could amount to \$2.8 million dependant upon participation.

Shawn Hagan and **Dave Johnson** opposed. Motion passed

Shawn Hagan opposed the motion as it lacked to recognize other users of the trail systems within the State Forest. Given economic times and the trouble the Department has had supporting this and other “non licensed” uses, it’s time to enact a comprehensive “Conservation License” whereby all users pay to support the State Forest System.

Dave Johnson opposed the trail pass because he feels it should be a part of a comprehensive user fee system, if applicable.

Inland lake – Stocking of Walleyes: Floyd Dropps

Warren asked Floyd in short form does this sum up your proposal: The WUP-CAC strongly supports the DNR Fish Division to restore the walleye planting program in inland lakes in Iron and Dickinson County

Floyd Dropps added, restore them immediately if not sooner in the priority lakes in Iron and Dickinson County. Once the priority lakes are restored, then I would like to talk about the remaining lakes. The DNR had lots of time to talk to us before they took the walleye away for seven years. Now is not the time to talk. Let’s get some fish back and then we’ll talk.

George Lindquist made a motion to support. Motion supported by several members. **Marcy Cella** and **Shawn Hagan** opposed. Motion passed.

Shawn Hagan opposed the motion and disappointment on the tact taken to put this issue in front of WUP-CAC. The Council was formed to represent many of the public comments and if the same meeting was held in Escanaba, I suspect the concerns regarding walleye plants would be quite different. Lets utilize our time together better in the future, given the appropriate DNR staff time to prepare if not be apart of the presentation and discuss a motion that moves the issue forward, not make ridiculous demands.

Warren asked Floyd Dropps to chair and Dave Johnson to co-chair a committee to work with Fisheries to meet with local citizens.

Pete Jandro said we have a member that has missed four meetings. According to the by-laws if a member misses three consecutive meetings, the member can be removed. Pete made a motion to remove Marvin Roberson, as this is the fourth consecutive meeting he has missed. **Marcy Cella** supported the motion.

Discussion followed on the by-laws and the number of meetings held since the by-laws were adopted. Warren said the CAC makes a recommendation to Stacy and the Director to remove a member. Warren will follow-up. **Chauncey Moran** abstained. Motion passed. **Shawn Hagan** left the meeting prior to this vote.

Longer Quiet Period for Bear Hunting Over Bait: Marty Johnson

Craig Albright said we are in the middle of bear management process. The DNR has held numerous meetings gathering issues on bear management. One issue is between the bait hunters and the hunters who use hounds. The recommendation was no training of hounds for five days prior to September 10. In return the houndsmen are asking for an extra week in July for training. The public can still submit comments on the draft plan to the NRC or provide written comments. The bear management plan will be presented to the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) for information on March 6 and for action at the April 2 NRC meeting.

Marty Johnson feels that the people he represents would support allowing the houndsmen to change the dog training date from July 15 to July 1.

Marty Johnson made a proposal to the CAC to support no use of bear hounds from September 10 to September 24.

George Lindquist made a motion to support. Motion supported. Motion passed with eight yes votes, six members abstained, **Marcy Cella, Chauncey Moran, Skip Schulz** and **Dennis Stachewicz, Jr.** opposed. **Shawn Hagan** left the meeting prior to this vote.

Marcy Cella opposes a longer quiet period for bear hunting over bait because at this time hunters without dogs have a five day advantage over hunting with dogs giving them an additional nine days, I feel is discrimination. In Wisconsin they give each group the first hunt every other year. People have asked how do I like dogs coming through my yard and I answer I prefer a dog to a bear. If there is a bear on our property the only way to get it is with dogs as we don't hunt bears.

ORV Trail Identification and Signage – Skip Schulz: This agenda item was postponed by Warren Suchovsky, Facilitator until the May meeting.

Proposed Meeting Dates for 2009/2010:

A motion was made to adopt the proposed meeting dates for 2009/2010. Motion supported and passed. **Skip Schulz** made a motion to have the May 18 meeting at Konteka, in White Pine. **Phil Wirtanen** suggested having the meeting at the Porcupine Mountain Park Headquarters. **Phil Wirtanen** supported the motion to have the May 18 meeting in Ontonagon County. Motion passed with location to be determined.

Stacy Welling announced the Snowmobile Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 26 at the Quality Suites in Sault Ste. Marie; the EUP-CAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 26, in Newberry; the MUCC deer

management listening session is scheduled for Monday, March 2, in Newberry; the EUP and the WUP CAC's will have a joint meeting on Thursday, March 19 at the Lakeview Arena, Citizen's Forum Room, Marquette; the UP Habitat Work Group meeting is scheduled to meet on Friday, March 27 in Iron Mountain and the NRC will meet on Thursday, March 6.

Rich Hill highlighted portions of the draft bill for an annual license plate fee proposal that would replace the current motor vehicle permit. The fee would be \$10 per vehicle, \$5 for motorcycles, both will have an opt out provision. The fee would allow entrance to State Parks and boating passes at access sites. The funds will be divided up as follows: 50 percent will go directly to state park operation infrastructure; 30 percent for state park operation and maintenance; 10 percent to local unit of governments, 7 percent to state forest campgrounds, and 3 percent to DNR's cultural and historical resources.

A motion was made and supported to adjourn the meeting.
Meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.